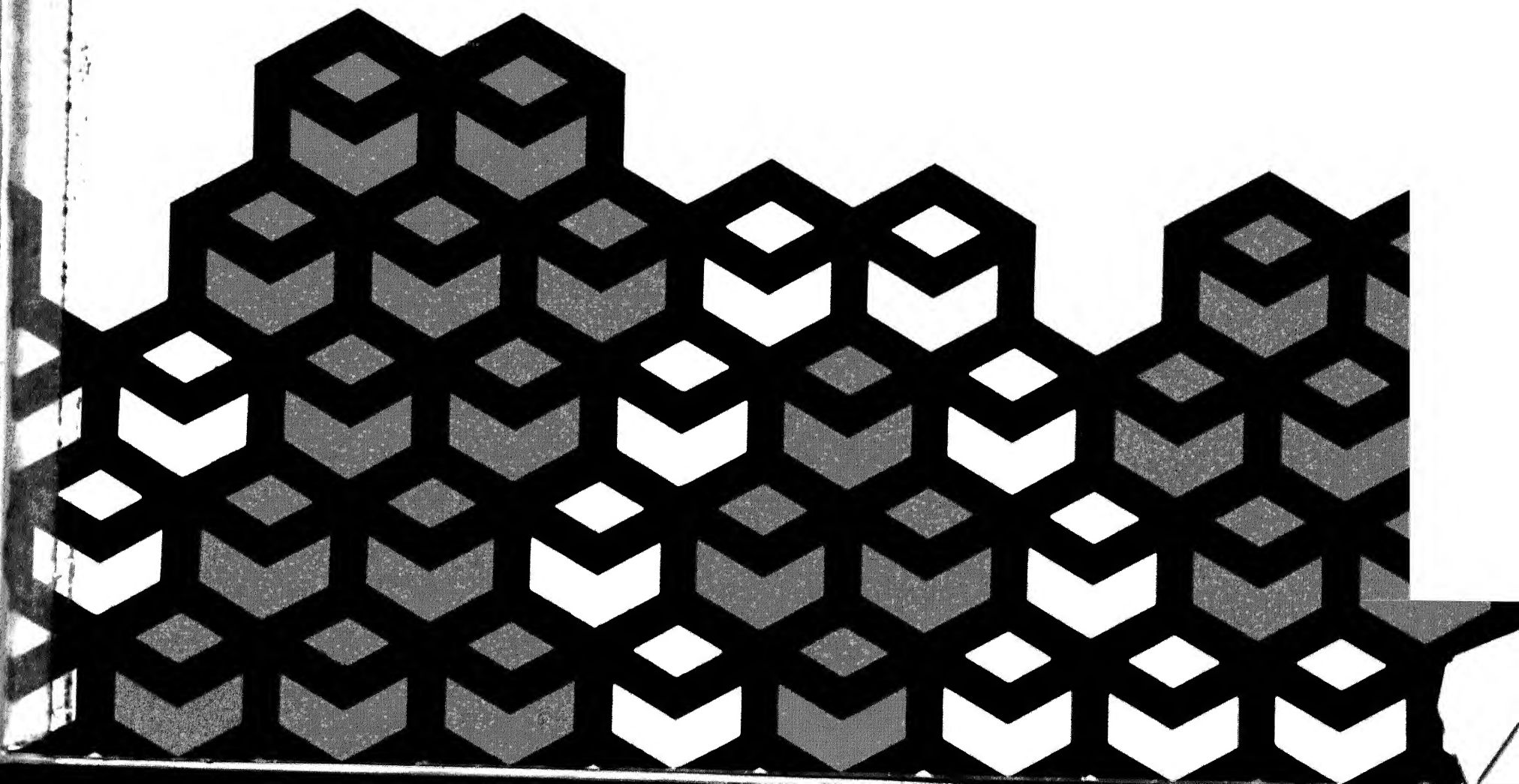


# Site Planning for Cluster Housing

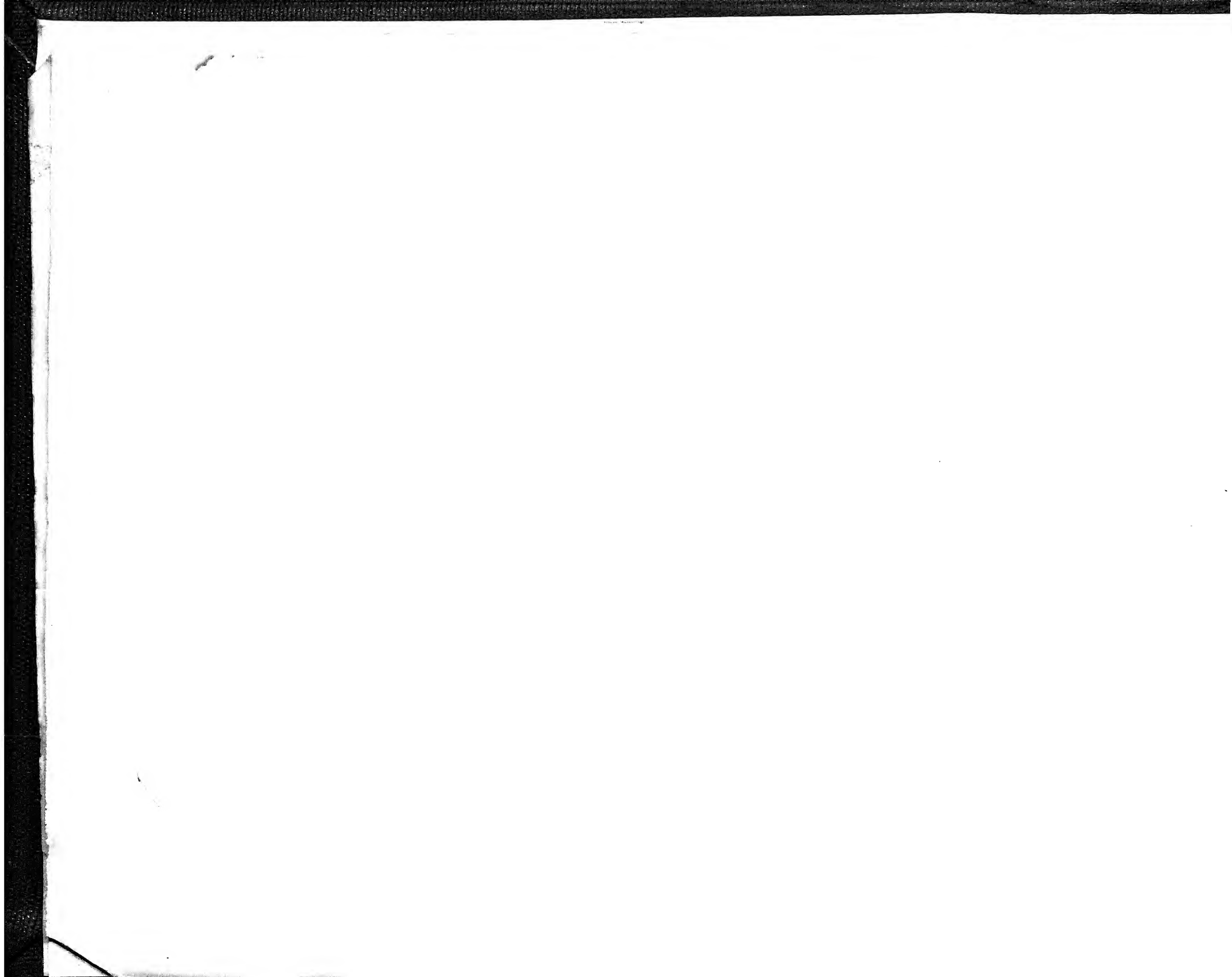
Richard Untermann & Robert Small



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# Site Planning for Cluster Housing

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## PREFACE

This book is about the process of physically designing cluster housing environments. It was written with a sense of urgency; there is great need for all the participants in the housing industry to develop new and improved skills in the planning and design of this reemerging house/settlement form.

The American pioneer dream of every family living in a single unit dwelling can no longer be sustained. The alarming escalation of human pathology in high-density/high-rise urban housing environments throughout the world has proven that human society cannot yet, and indeed may never be able to, adapt to this settlement form. Not by default then, but for many compelling reasons, the viable alternative of medium-density cluster housing environments has been emerging from the decay of 19th and 20th century American urban and suburban housing environments.

Cluster housing may be found in many environments, in many climates, on many land forms, and may be built of many different materials. It is certainly not a new housing form; its antecedents are found in a very broad range of cultures that span the entire history of man as a builder of human settlements. It is found in many early civilizations in highly refined forms such as Mediterranean hill towns, villages on the African savanna, Arctic Eskimo igloo villages, and southwest American Indian pueblos. There are also many fine contemporary examples of urban cluster housing throughout the world, most of them occurring in the technologically advanced nations of Western Europe. There are few, by comparison, in America itself.

Cluster housing has only recently begun developing as a contemporary residential environment in North America, and it is very likely that, as it becomes understood, it will become accepted by an increasingly larger proportion of the American

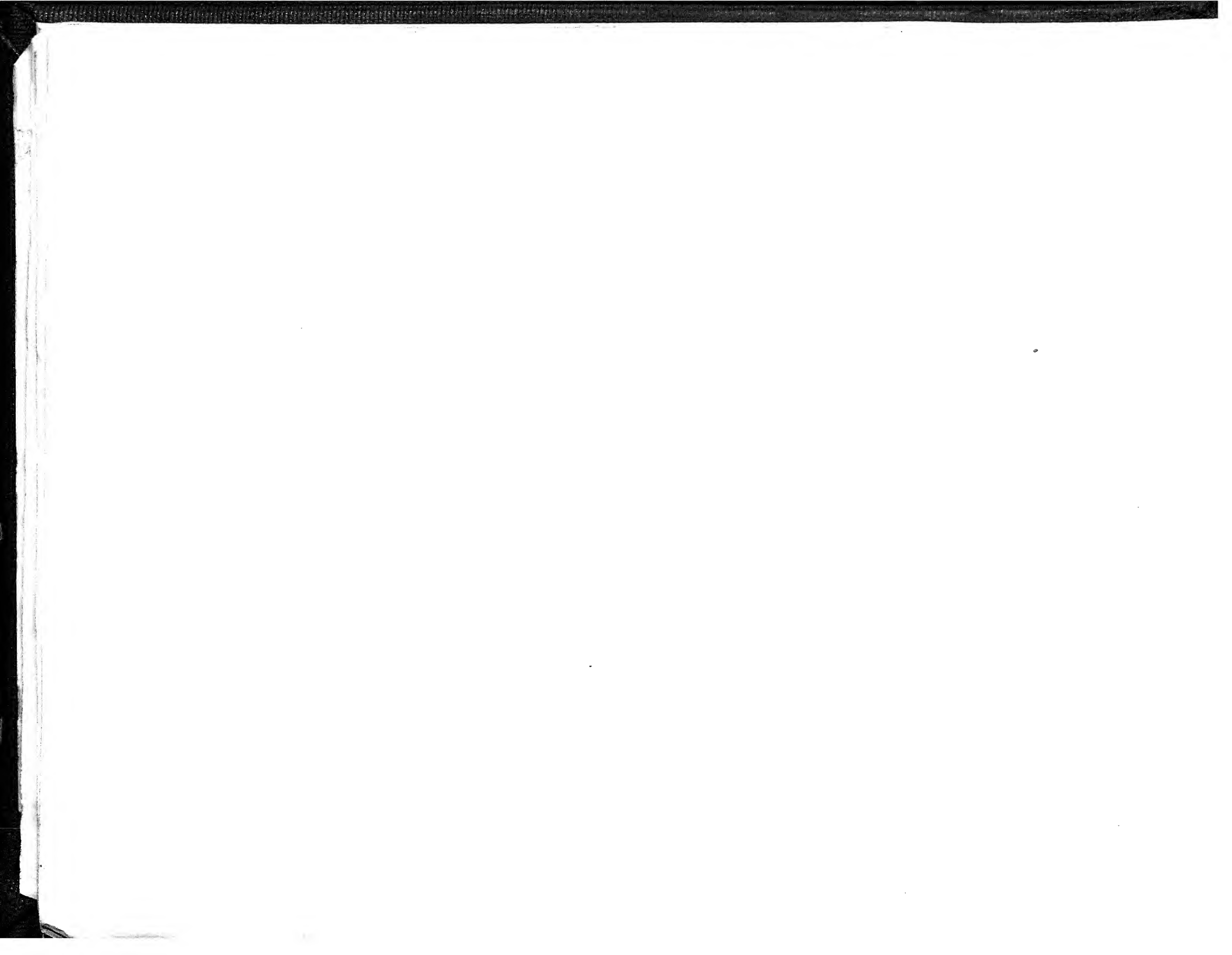
public. There is a growing public awareness of the urgent need to find an alternative to urban crowding and its resultant social problems. But there is also a growing public awareness of the need to conserve the land, its natural systems, its open space, and its capability to yield sufficient material and energy resources. These two needs, which have seemingly conflicting objectives, must now be perceived as one need with one set of objectives. A close examination of the cluster housing environments reveals it has the potential to meet this set of objectives.

Literature in the area of housing is increasing. There are numerous books and articles written on housing designs and design standards; and there is an encouraging increase in literature on human needs and responses in housing environments. There is, however, very little written on the development of housing environments as a whole. This book applies current theory and information on cluster housing, human needs in housing, and site planning to an action-oriented format intended to aid professionals in designing and implementing housing developments at any scale.

The book places emphasis upon the development of low-rise, medium-density cluster environments that optimize the interrelationship of land form and house form. The cluster environments are planned as components, and groups of components, that fit into the larger scale planning of existing neighborhoods and new communities. As open space/garden apartment-type housing developments, they have characteristics best described as a mixture of Radburn, Reston, Hook New Town, Columbia, Rochampton, and other similar planned residential environments. These developments begin to accomplish, at a reasonable cost, a rich integration of amenity preservation, conservation of open space, efficiency of operation, and personal privacy, identity, safety, and accessibility.

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